# **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium SBAC Weekly Update**

Issue 27 Week ending Friday, August 5, 2011

## **Top News this Week**

- Webinar on ELA/Literacy Content Specifications and Evidence-Based Design on Monday, August 8, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. PDT
- Marty McCall named SBAC lead psychometrician
- Voting for the Executive Committee member election is open through Monday, August 8
- Poll regarding new governance language open through Monday, August 8
- SBAC third quarter project report now available

The SBAC Weekly Update is an email sent each Friday to keep Consortium members and collaborators informed of new developments and upcoming events. The Update is widely distributed to Consortium State Leads, Work Group members, Consortium and WestEd staff, and Consortium advisors, partners, and service providers.

State members should feel free to share information in the Update with those who are interested in the Consortium's work.

Embedded links in the Update sometimes direct you to the website, <a href="http://smarter.k12partners.org/">http://smarter.k12partners.org/</a>, designed for use by Consortium members. If you are a state employee in a Consortium state and need access to material on this website, please click the "Create new account" link on the website to register. If you are not a state employee in a Consortium state and need material from this site, please ask your state lead to forward it to you.

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#### From the Executive Director

Greetings. Next week marks an important milestone for our Consortium with the release of the draft ELA/Literacy Content Specifications document. Content specifications provide clear targets—based on the Common Core State Standards—for each grade level, from which test specifications and items can be developed. The specifications will ensure that the assessment system accurately assesses the full range of the Common Core State Standards. We look forward to your feedback.

The review process for the content specifications is consistent with our values as a stateled consortium. States and membership organizations will have two opportunities to provide input on the ELA and math specifications. Member states will have an opportunity to participate in webinars with experts on each content specifications document, and all materials will be posted publicly at <a href="https://www.smarterbalanced.org">www.smarterbalanced.org</a>.

I am also pleased to announce that Marty McCall, from Portland, Oregon, will join the SBAC team as lead psychometrician. Marty has extensive leadership and technical expertise in the design, planning, and production of comprehensive assessments.

Marty's duties will include managing test development activities and psychometric and statistical analysis projects; providing technical assistance to relevant work groups; monitoring procedures for item writing; monitoring test construction, test review, scoring, and reporting; developing interpretive documents; and providing technical documentation related to projects and activities.

Marty comes to SBAC from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), where she led the development of multiple facets of computer adaptive test design. Prior to NWEA, she worked as a psychometrician for the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Marty is also a former teacher, and has authored more than a dozen academic papers and has presented at conferences across the country. She received her Ph.D. in systems science from Portland State University.

We are thrilled to have Marty on board, and we look forward to her beginning work on September 1. JW

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#### Announcements

Poll regarding new governance language—The Consortium is currently polling Governing State leads regarding new governance language describing the process the Consortium will follow in the event of a tie in electing Executive Committee co-chairs and members. Governing State leads are reminded to complete the poll by Monday, August 8. Polling information can be found at <a href="http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/polls">http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/polls</a>.

Executive Committee member elections—The Consortium is currently conducting elections to select a new Executive Committee member to fill the vacancy created by Carissa Miller's election as Executive Committee Co-Chair. Governing State leads are reminded to cast their ballots by email by Monday, August 8. You can find election information at <a href="http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/election">http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/election</a>.

New public website address—A reminder that you can now direct people to our public website with the URL <a href="www.smarterbalanced.org">www.smarterbalanced.org</a>. This will take viewers directly to our pages hosted by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction at <a href="http://k12.wa.us/smarter/">http://k12.wa.us/smarter/</a>.

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# **Upcoming Events**

Evidence-Based Design webinar—Please join a Consortium webinar about evidence-based design on Monday, August 8, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. PDT. This webinar will help members more effectively facilitate their states' review of the first draft of the Consortium's ELA/Literacy Content Specifications document. Speakers include Dr. Joseph Ryan, professor emeritus at Arizona State University; Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education at the Stanford University School of Education; Karin Hess, senior associate with the National Center for Assessment; and Dr. Joe Willhoft, executive director of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. Please see separate email for login information.

Governing States meeting—The next meeting of the Governing States occurs on Tuesday, August 9, at 10 a.m. PDT. Please see separate email for agenda and login information.

Innovative Item Types webinar—Save 1–3 p.m. PDT on Monday, August 15, for the next SBAC webinar. Dr. Kathleen Scalise, associate professor of educational methodology, policy, and leadership at the University of Oregon, and Dr. Mark Wilson, professor of policy, organization, measurement, and evaluation at the University of California–Berkeley, will discuss innovative computer-based test items, as well as new processes for developing items.

Chiefs meeting—Chief state school officers from SBAC member states are invited to a face-to-face meeting on Wednesday, August 31, in Chicago. The final agenda for the meeting will be available on Wednesday, August 24. Please save the date.

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#### Resources

Quarterly report—The summary report for the third quarter was distributed this week and can be found at <a href="http://www.smarterbalanced.org">http://www.smarterbalanced.org</a>.

Documents for chiefs—Chief state school officers can find useful documents about the Consortium on the Documents page in the State Chiefs section of the member website, <a href="http://smarter.k12partners.org/">http://smarter.k12partners.org/</a>.

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## **Answering Open Questions**

In late July, Consortium work group co-chairs and Governing State leads gathered in Denver. The discussion generated more questions than there was time to answer adequately in person. Each week, we will address a question or two in the Weekly Update and respond to other questions that come our way.

What is the plan for Governing States to reach consensus on key production and design decisions?

SBAC is implementing the assessment as described in the proposal to the U.S. Department of Education. That's our roadmap. Significant deviations from the proposal will be thoroughly vetted among the membership.

Ensuring that the Consortium adheres to the published production and design schedule requires the active participation of work groups. Work groups represent the larger interests of the Consortium and can provide rapid feedback to vendors. They are also comprised of members who understand the need for the Consortium to move forward with consensus.

Of course, even a well-managed project can run into trouble. As a further precaution, work groups are incorporating provisions into their RFPs that require vendors to actively work with the entire membership to support our consensus-based model of design and development, as appropriate. In addition, Executive Committee members review the RFPs prior to release and will consider whether member participation is sufficiently addressed.

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### Archive

Weekly selections of news items relevant to the Consortium are available at <a href="http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/news-archive">http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/news-archive</a>.

Previous SBAC Weekly Updates are available at <a href="http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/sbac-weekly-update-archive">http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/sbac-weekly-update-archive</a>.

Minutes from previously held meetings are available at <a href="http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/agendas-and-minutes">http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/agendas-and-minutes</a>.

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